



## Fire by Night

*Lynn Austin*

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One deceived by a life of wealth and ease, the other desperate to flee her true identity. In a land shattered by war, unlikely heroes test the limits of their strength and discover that love has a meaning far beyond their imagination.

## **Fire by Night Details**

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Author : Lynn Austin

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## From Reader Review Fire by Night for online ebook

### Camille says

I truly loved this whole trilogy. My book club started with the third book in the series, and I loved it so much that I HAD to read the other two. Each one is set during the civil war and each story is told from different view points during parallel times. One time we read about a slave owner and her slaves. Another book covers a slave owner who is sympathetic to the slaves and helps them. And the third book covers a young girl who serves in the war. All the characters cross over with each other in all the books. I loved the character development and fell in love with the characters. Another favorite part of mine is how the author is not afraid to share the characters' belief in Christ. I couldn't put the books down and would highly recommend them to anyone. There is history, emotion, drama and even a little bit of romance.

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### Ebookwormy1 says

This second book of Lynn Austin's Refiner's Fire Civil War Series looks at the war years through the eyes of a northern high society young woman and a poor gal from Western Virginia.

Themes are: Sacrificing self to respond to the needs of others, overcoming loneliness to learn to love, and discovering and answering God's call on your life.

I picked this book up eager for more information on Caroline and Charles and desiring to see how they rebuilt their life and relationship in the post-war years (Candle in the Darkness, Book 1 of the series). However, this book goes back to the beginning of the war to tell the civil war story from completely different perspectives. While the same years and events appear, characters from the first book are seldom mentioned or appear briefly.

Once again, I was impressed with Austin's writing style. Her grasp of relational dynamic is once again strong (see my review on Eve's Daughter's) and I'm starting to grasp her wonderful ability of perspective (which was also evident in Eve's Daughters). She continues to spin clever stories, allowing her characters to intertwine at times, but not dependent on that to the point where you can expect they will meet up again. While it would have been tempting to have the characters from Book 1 or references to them play a stronger part, Austin has plenty to say without them. Her plots are neither formulaic nor filled with events one would predict. In this book, there were some things I suspected, but you never know with this author - I like it that she keeps me guessing.

It is true that this book lacks, somehow, the brilliance of Book 1, "Candle in the Darkness". But, I cannot determine what the difference is, and am wondering if it is me - maybe the themes in the first book were simply more applicable to my life, or addressed a current struggle more closely than those presented here. Nonetheless, this is a wonderful read. If all Christian fiction authors were as skilled as Lynn Austin, the genre would have a much better reputation!

There's more to this excellent series:

A Light to my Path, Austin, 2004

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

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## Sonya says

4.5

Buddy read with Aerykah :)

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## Olivia says

Okay, so I know I am one of the few that dislikes this book. I will say I *enjoyed* this book in general a lot more than the first one. The story drew me; the battles, nursing, etc. was all very interesting. The whole thing with Phoebe was fascinating, although a little awkward at times, and didn't seem to go with Julia's POV. But to be honest, I like Phoebe's story a lot more than Julia's!

### **\*spoilers below\***

First reason for the dislike:

The whole deal with Julia lying about being married. I get that, okay, but it also bothered me. And then the fact that Julia thought the doctor was married worsened the issue. THEN they become attracted to each other when both think the other is married!!!! And they kiss thinking that!!! When I was reading it didn't click, but once I was done it hit me. How convenient neither one was married. What if they had been? I mean really? Also, the doctor does grow on one (I'll admit that I was kinda rooting for him...), but he is very crude and some of his comments made me cringe. I understand it had to do with his past and he did change for the better.....BUT...

Second reason for the dislike:

Toward the end I wanted to throw something at Julia. I was so mad with her. Basically the reason why she chose the doctor (I cannot remember his name!!) over Nathaniel Greene (which was portrayed as very nice at the beginning and then everything changed) was because he kissed better. I'm serious! So maybe Nathaniel wasn't the one for her...and maybe he didn't love her truly, but to base all that on a kiss...I'm sorry, that is dreadful.

### **\*end of spoilers\***

I will give Julia a little benefit. She didn't fall deadly in love with one certain man right away.

So there are my reasons. And if you love this book...then good for you ;) I'm getting a little tired of Christian romances that focus so much on the physical side. And also, stories about a rogue guy who have a terrible background. Why can't there be more books with godly young men, that do have struggles, but aren't distasteful in their actions and words?

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## Kristina says

Oh my! What a great book! I laughed, I cried and was completely absorbed in the story. Lynn Austin, your

work is wonderful! I am currently reading the next book in the series and when I've finished, I will write a full review.

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### **Salyna says**

Do you ever read a book that is sooo... good that you just have to prolong it and take your time with it? And do you ever ONLY read the book at a certain time of day at your favorite reading place so you can hopefully get even more into it? NO? \*Shrug\* Maybe it's just me, but this one was THAT good.

I am loving the Refiner's Fire series. It is great! The descriptions are tremendous and the characters seem so REAL. I feel like I am actually standing there in the story, kind a like I'm a by stander just watching everything happen: The battles, the fighting, the healing, the restoring...Etc.

I thought this whole book was going to be about Julia trying to win Nathaniel's heart. Boring! Thank goodness it wasn't! Lynn Austin also added Phoebe to the story. So, I saw two different perspectives throughout the whole book. I saw how Julia and Phoebe met and how they came to be close friends, and the trials they faced during their everyday lives. On top of that lets not forget that both of them do meet more men on the way... good and bad which added to my interest in the book.

I saw their experiences/roles during the Civil War first hand. If you read the description above then you know that Julia signed up as a nurse and Phoebe enlisted in the war under false pretenses. So, I felt like I was experiencing living in the woods as a soldier and helping with treatments for patients, including seeing mutilated bodies and surgery operations. I know that the Civil War was an extremely sad time for America, but reading about it is so great! I'm having fun while learning history!

Definite Recommendation!

My blog: <http://kissedbooks.blogspot.com/>

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### **Anne says**

You know a book is wonderfully good when you still think about it weeks after you've finished, when you're still lost in its world long after reading the last page, and when the characters still cling to you as though they were your best friends. *Fire by Night* is just such a book. I became so lost in it I was able to read it anywhere, regardless of my surroundings. Everything else was forgotten as I plunged wholeheartedly in this wonderful, intense and passionate story of courage, selflessness, love and self-forgiveness. The first book of the series, *Candle in the Darkness* was amazing and I loved it, but this one...this one had me completely entranced. It's quite possibly my favourite book of the year. The characters are real, relatable, human. They come alive as the story unfolds, and I could connect, understand and love them. Their adventures and experiences are believable and the settings and atmosphere so well described that, even though I have never experienced the gruesome sight of a bloody battlefield, Ms. Austin's descriptions are the closest insight I have had - and wish to have. Everything in this novel was so engrossing. And for once I didn't care that they were two heroines, that some scenes were incredibly sad, and that there were two stories going on at the beginning.

Rich, pampered and spoiled, Julia Hoffman lives a life of luxury and ease as a Philadelphia belle amongst the elite. She is young, beautiful, and very much solicited after. In these times of war and danger, all that is

expected of her is that she pick a husband, start her own family and continue on with her life of fancy afternoon teas and expensive soirées. Julia has set her cap at dynamic, passionate Pastor Nathaniel Greene, a fierce abolitionist and ardent philanthropist, but he wants nothing to do with Julia. He is looking for a wife who is selfless, loving, generous and giving. A woman who will know what is expected of a minister's wife and willingly comply to her husband's will. In short, he wants a compliant woman who will obey him. And Julia is none of that.

After she witnesses the Battle of Bull Run, an ashamed Julia overhears a mortifying comment about her, and makes an important decision that will forever alter the course of her life.

For her part, Phoebe Bigelow is not afraid of the war. She would much rather enlist along with her brothers and go on shooting Rebels, than stay behind and work for that odious Mrs. Haggerty, all the while having to wear a *dress* and behaving womanly. Phoebe thinks she is ugly and that no one will marry her, so why play the part of a woman when she could easily pass off for a man, with her great height and stocky build, and enroll in the army?

Two very different women, coming from two very different worlds, running away for very different reasons. The one so pretty and delicate, but determined and outspoken. The other, strong, fierce and made for hard work. The one thing they have in common, is that they are both serving for the same war. Heart-wrenching, bloody, miserable, difficult, uncontrollable war. They will never emerge from it all the same person again.

Do yourself a big favor and read this book. You won't regret it. It's amazing. It has danger, suspense, battles, adventure and romance. The hero is unlike any I had ever encountered, and I found myself falling for him the moment I met him, and swooning all over the place by the end. He just made me melt. \*sigh\*

I really cannot wait to get my hands on the final book of the series, *A Light to my Path*!!

And now, for the spoilerish comments, for those who have read the book :)

(view spoiler)

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**Nessy96 says**

I'll never stop loveing these books

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**Rebekah says**

\*sigh\* one of my ABSOLUTE FAVORITES! REREAD!!!

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**Aerykah says**

I'll try to write an actual review of this book sometime... For now, though, suffice it to say that this is at least my 4th time through this book and I'm still enjoying it! :)

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**Robin says**

I loved this series - 3 books taking place in the Civil War time. I learned SO MUCH of what led up to the secession and ultimately the war, from the citizen's viewpoint.

First book, Candle in the Darkness, had a young woman growing up on a plantation surrounded by slaves, yet she just couldn't understand why the members of her family (and everyone) thought of them as property and not human beings. It shows the Southerner's point of view. You don't end up condoning slavery obviously, but you see why so many were caught up in their traditional way of life and 'industry.' (But I also want so badly to bang my head against the wall and cry, HOW could human beings do this to other human beings?!)

The 2nd in the series, Fire by Night, has her cousin from the north also viewing all the happenings of war, from the comfort of her spoiled, rich-girl life in Philadelphia. She learns to get involved, to step outside her comfort zone and serve others. She meets another young woman from Virginia who experiences war first hand when SHE goes and fights in the war herself.

3rd in the series, A Light to My Path, follows slaves as they grow up and experience the war and ultimately their freedom. It also wraps up the lives of characters even from the first book.

Miss Austin has a religious tone overall - her message for the first and 3rd book strongly encourages giving oneself over to the Lord to let HIM take away the pain and anger. Eli, a religious slave, is a wonderful character in the first book. One can't help but love his faith and devotion, his teaching this young white girl the basics of Christianity and faith in the plainest terms.

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**Joleen says**

***Fire by Night* by Lynn Austin**

**Time Frame:** 1861-1865 (Civil War)

**Location:** Philadelphia, Washington DC area and Gettysburg

**Main Characters:**

*Julia Hoffman* Twenty year old, single and beautiful

*James McGrath*: Bitter, mean-spirited surgeon for Union Army

*Nathaniel Greene*: Single, abolitionist pastor Julia has been in love with for years

Another amazing Lynn Austin book, second in the Refiner's Fire series. I'd read *Candle in the Darkness* years ago, always remembered it, but haven't read the follow-up book until today. Actually, the time frame for both books is about the same (throughout the whole Civil war). The first book is about Julia's cousin, Caroline, who had been spending time at Julia's family home in Philadelphia, but left to take care of things at her family estate in Virginia, which was a slave state. In the beginning of *Refiner's Fire* Julia was madly in love with the handsome, single, abolitionist preacher, Nathaniel. In *Fire by Night*, she still is.

Synopsis - for my sake. This part will give away too much if you intend to read the book.

(view spoiler)

This was such a good book. Clearly much *Civil War* research was done, which I loved. But more than that was how Christ is shown many times throughout the book. The sacrifice of one person putting their body in front of another's is an illustration of Christ's love for us, to offer us life when what would happen otherwise would have been death. No greater love...

Once again Lynn Austin has knocked my socks off, and I'm in awe.

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**Tweety says**

*Before I begin let me just say that* : #1 I don't usually like books that have two heroines and two heros, I feel that it's some how cheating and that each couple should have their own book. #2 I detest spoiled brats. #3 I hate it when a character I like dies. But you see I still gave this five! And that is because this is the best book I've ever read with more than one main story line in it that clocks in a 473 pages. HOW did she *do* it? Readers, I don't know.

But I do know that she did a wonderful job. How often do we see a spoiled heroine who has actually done an about turn by the end? Not often. How often does an author kill off a beloved character and make it up to

you? Rarely, very rarely.

So, that is what I love about this book, it's Lynn Austen's absolute best IMO. Watching Julia Hoffman turn from spoiled society belle to an unselfish war nurse was sometime else, especially because it took her time. She didn't just become unselfish overnight.

Then, the Hero. He is my favorite of all of Lynn's heroes. His having a beard may have something to do with that... but I think it's just him. He's tortured by his past and cannot get passed it.

As for the other Hero and Heroine, I can't spoil it for you by saying anything about them. But Phoebe Bigelow was an amazing character. She was too tall, too plain and could shoot like a man. Who in their right mind would want to marry her? Phoebe can't think of anyone so she does the unthinkable, and marches off to war. She was a free spirit, no one could bind her to their opinions. (And that's what I loved so much about her, that and her self sacrificing love)

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PG-13 *For the battle descriptions, (not gory I promise) the attempted rape, two murders and nursing. FYI, there were a few preachy spots, I skipped them without losing any of the story.*

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### **Amanda Tero says**

When it comes to capturing the Civil War accurately, Lynn Austin has it down. She didn't glorify the war nor romanticize people's reaction to it. It was the perfect balance of real people from various backgrounds facing hardship like never before.

I really liked the nursing side of the story. There was great detail given to the various diseases and cures and debates between doctors. I'm not a nurse and don't think I could ever be one, so I was surprised that I thoroughly enjoyed this aspect of the story.

At times, I really liked Julia's story--a spoiled rich girl setting out to prove someone's accusation of her wrong. I was very interested to see how her story would end up, and when it comes to the "moral of her story," I liked it. The attitude she had when setting out was not the same attitude when she finished. But other parts of her story left me uncomfortable (more on that later).

Phoebe's (Ike's) story overall was my favorite. There were some awkward situations and places her mind when that left me uncomfortable (again, more later), but as a whole, I enjoyed her character and personality.

Dr. McGrath... coarse, yes; rude, yes. However, his character was the most brilliantly developed. As a writer, this was my favorite character. As a reader... let me just skip to the romance part...

It wasn't just the romance that made me uncomfortable (romance as in the girls' love interests) but the whole way the girls thought and the depth that Austin went to sometimes to describe their feelings. Yes, their feelings were natural, but it could have been more discreet (like when Phoebe "realized" that she was a girl and her buddy was a guy). The whole relationship between Julia and the doctor was very disturbing for me--some things are resolved in the final portion of the book that, had I known one detail sooner, I wouldn't have had an uncomfortable feeling throughout the whole book. But, I didn't know that piece of information. So for me as a conservative reader, it really put me on edge--so much so that, I really didn't like the conclusion of

this story. It almost gives the readers the message of, "Just follow your heart; it can't help falling in love, and even if it's not exactly acceptable, everything will work out in the end and you'll get what you want." I don't think this is the message that the author intended to put in there, but to me, it came out as a strong message.

The spiritual aspect of this story confused me. I suppose the author was trying to display everyone in their various walks, but nothing really resolved and none of the characters really seemed to have a solid answer from God's Word. They had questions about the Bible, and there were a lot of "I thinks" but nothing really conclusive. And then, the whole issue of a woman submitting to her husband vs. following God was dealt with in a very confusing fashion for me. I'd wager to say that the view of Nathaniel Greene and Julia's father were more accurate to the era, but again, it just fell lacking to me. Maybe I was looking for more Scripture (like book one had). I don't mean to sound harsh, it's just that some big topic issues were dealt with, the characters were striving to follow God, yet there was more about "how I feel God leading me" rather than "the Bible says this" and that message can be a very dangerous one to follow (which, I know, is my personal conviction of how to root our beliefs--in God's Word, not our feelings).

In conclusion, this doesn't quite make a 4-star book for me. It is a book that, though I enjoyed parts of it, found it amazingly historically accurate, I probably won't be inclined to re-read.

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### **Alicia says**

This book is amazing! It is too hard to pick a favourite Lynn Austin book but right now this one's my favourite!

The story follows two main characters: a young socialite who becomes a nurse during the Civil War to prove that she isn't self-centred and snobbish, and a farm girl who disguises herself as a boy and joins the Union army to avoid life at home. Their stories start out separately but eventually overlap, and these two main points of view worked really well together.

Throughout this book, I felt:

- amused (some of those witty comments had me giggling!),
- butterflies (Julia and you know who!! One of my favourite book couples),
- annoyed at Nathaniel (however, ironically, one of his sermons moved me to tears),
- happy, sad- a whole roller coaster of emotions because these characters become your book friends, and
- completely in awe of the story!

**READ THIS BOOK!** Lynn Austin's gift for storytelling really shines in this story and I know I'm going to keep reading it over and over again. 5+ stars!

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